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Diplomate of the American Board of Dermatology  
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## **KAREN L. CONNOLLY, M.D.**

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**On behalf of our entire staff, we welcome you to our office. It is our hope that this letter will provide the answers to many of your questions and gives you a better understanding of exactly what Mohs surgery is.**

**Mohs surgery is a term derived from the originator of the surgical procedure. Dr. Frederic Mohs, Professor of Surgery at the University of Wisconsin, developed this specialized technique for the treatment of skin cancers. It is a method of surgical excision in which the microscope is used to determine the precise location and extent of the tumor. Microscopic control enables the surgeon to “trace the cancer to its roots”, at the same time sacrificing the least amount of normal healthy tissue. For this reason, skin cancers in difficult locations such as those involving the ears, eyelids, nose, or lips are ideally treated with the Mohs technique. Also, cancers that are hidden in scar tissue from previous procedures can be effectively treated this way.**

**The number of patients who have been cured clearly demonstrates that Mohs’ surgery is the most successful of all methods for the treatment of skin cancer. Utilizing the Mohs’ technique, the cure rate is usually 97-99%, even if other forms of treatment have failed.**

**Mohs surgery requires highly specialized training and technology; therefore few medical centers and private offices in the United States are equipped to offer such treatment. We have operating suites and a frozen section laboratory managed by a licensed histology technician in our office. We are located in a modern medical building across from St. Barnabas Medical Center.**

**The surgical procedure itself involves several steps. First, the skin suspicious for cancer cells is numbed with a local anesthetic. A thin layer of tissue is then surgically removed and carefully divided into small sections. The excised pieces of tissue are then examined under the microscope at the time of surgery. Before examining the tissue, it is marked with colored dyes to distinguish left and right, top and bottom. In this way, the location of any remaining tumor can be pinpointed precisely. If more cancer cells are found, this process is repeated, but only in the area of the remaining cancer. The procedure is usually done entirely in our office. Several thin layers of tissue may need to be removed, but all surgery is generally completed in one day.**

**It is advisable to have someone accompany you on the day of surgery to provide companionship and to drive you home. If you take aspirin at the direction of your physician for heart or circulation problems, you should continue the aspirin as usual unless we tell you otherwise. However, if you are not taking aspirin prescribed by a physician, do not take it, or other medicines containing aspirin such as Bufferin or Anacin for routine aches and pains for two weeks prior to surgery. Aspirin interferes with normal blood clotting and may cause excessive bleeding during surgery. If you are unsure about any of your medications, call the office immediately.**

**After the surgery, a decision is made as to the best way to repair the defect created by the removal of the entire cancer. At times, the wound may be allowed to heal naturally, or a surgical repair with stitches can be performed in order to facilitate healing and provide a better cosmetic result. Our nurses will teach you how to change the dressing and will give you printed instructions. There is usually little discomfort post-operatively. Rarely does bleeding occur following surgery. We remind you again, not to take aspirin unless prescribed by your physician. You may take Tylenol as needed. Depending on the location and the size of the wound, we may recommend restricted physical activity for a period of time. Details will be discussed with you on the day of surgery.**

**Please make sure that you eat a normal breakfast and take your regular medicines on the day of surgery unless directed otherwise by our office.**

**If you have any specific questions about your case, we will be glad to answer them during your consultation.**